

The chosen topic for this MastersThesis is “Assistance to Victims of Crime” - primarily due to its growing social significance. Society as a whole should not turn a blind eye to the serious impact of crime, focusing only on the punishment of convicted criminals; it should also focus on assistance to those harmed and affected by crime. Criminals usually commit crimes with a strong conscious awareness of their misbehaviour, while victims have no similar expectation; for them, a criminal event is like something “out of the blue”. The shocking and traumatic impact following the crime, is something unbelievable for one who never had such an experience; hence, the return back to normal life is often very difficult for victims of crime. A society which aspires to be modern and developed should make this return as easy as possible, implementing a series of measures in the field of assistance.

My goal was to describe the possibilities which exist in this area but also to concentrate on the current legislation, especially on new rights being brought into practice by the new Victims of Crime Assistance Act No 45/2013 Coll.

The Thesis consists of eight chapters including an Introduction and a Conclusion.

The first part is dedicated to victimology, a part of criminology that comprises a scientific study focused on victims of crime: its short development, as well as its basic terms which are crucial for handling the issue.

An overall discussion on possibilities to assist victims of crime then follows, both focusing on (non-professional) ordinary human help and on psychological, social or legal assistance as part of an expert approach.

Next, a part devoted to current legislation (both Czech and international) is of great importance since it shows the development of the legal environment in terms of assistance to victims of crime. This chapter extensively describes the relatively new Czech Victim of Crime Assistance Act, its content, basic terms and the principles which the Act adheres to.

The Act also created a new, systematic catalogue of victims’ rights. Therefore, the core of the Thesis is a chapter which analyzes the individual rights as stated in the catalogue, their content and meaning. Those rights and the ways they can be implemented are of extreme importance for victims of crime.

Another key part of the Thesis is a chapter which deals with several organisations providing assistance to victims of crime. Be it NGOs or governmental bodies, those entities are vitally instrumental in achieving the high level of assistance which currently exists in the Czech Republic. The Thesis focused mainly on the Probation and Mediation Service of the Czech Republic and also on an NGO called “White Ring of Safety”.

The penultimate chapter touches upon the situation in the field of assistance to victims of crime in Slovakia. The discussion here is less extensive because the situation is not as developed as in the Czech Republic: indeed, the view of this Thesis is that the existing legislation is not sufficient at all, nor is the activity of assisting organisations enough. One of the reasons for this is the lack of finance and governmental funding.

The Conclusion summarizes how the situation in the Czech Republic has changed following the approval of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act – by highlighting both positive features and negative consequences which could be taken into account in possible future amendments to the Act.